

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 19474

EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV EG
SUBJECT: SADAT--THE MAN

1. THIS IS THE THIRD IN A SERIES OF THREE MESSAGES
DEALING WITH THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DYNAMICS OF THE
EGYPTIAN POLITICAL SCENE. IT ASSESSES SADAT THE MAN AND
SOME OF HIS PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AS HE APPROACHES THE
UPCOMING CAMP DAVID TALKS.

2. ON NEXT CHRISTMAS DAY SADAT WILL BE 60. ALTHOUGH HIS
HEALTH IS GOOD, HE WORRIES ABOUT PAST CORONARY PROBLEMS,
DIETS AND CAREFULLY PACES HIMSELF. HE CATCHES COLD
EASILY. HIS PERSONALITY IS DICHOTOMOUS: HIS MOOD CAN
QUICKLY CHANGE FROM WARM AMIABILITY TO SHARP CRITICISM.
HE HAS IN RECENT WEEKS SHOWN CONSIDERABLE IRRITABILITY IN
DEALING WITH SUBORDINATES, LARGELY BECAUSE NEITHER HIS
INTERNAL NOR HIS EXTERNAL PROJECTS SEEM TO BE GOING WELL.
HE HAS NO CLOSE ADVISERS, ONLY A FEW CRONIES, AND MANY
FEAR THAT HE HAS BECOME ISOLATED FROM THE MAINSTREAM OF
EGYPTIAN PUBLIC CONCERNS. HE WOULD STOUTLY DENY THAT AND
INSIST THAT HE KNOWS HIS PEOPLE AND THEIR ASPIRATIONS.
HE HAS OF LATE BEEN SUBJECT TO INCREASING, IF MUTED,
PUBLIC CRITICISM BECAUSE OF LACK OF ANY SUCCESSES TO
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WHICH HE COULD POINT. HIS PEACE INITIATIVE, WHICH EIGHT
MONTHS AGO CAPTURED THE IMAGINATION OF MOST EGYPTIANS,
HAS FOUNDERED. HE IS NOW CRITICIZED FOR NAIVETE IN
DEALING WITH THE ISRAELIS AND HAVING PREMATURELY PLAYED
HIS MAIN CARD, I.E. NORMALIZATION.

3. SADAT'S LIFE HAS AT TIMES BEEN TURBULENT AND HE HAS

PASSED THROUGH SEVERAL METAMORPHOSES. HE HAS BEEN AN OFFICER, ARDENT NATIONALIST, ANTI-BRITISH TERRORIST, PROPAGANDIST, LEGISLATOR, EDITOR AND POLITICIAN. SADAT HAS TODAY MELLOWED AND THINKS OF HIMSELF PRIMARILY IN TWO ROLES--WORLD STATESMAN AND HEAD OF THE EGYPTIAN "FAMILY". HIS BASIC APPROACH TO RULE IS PATERNAL, BENEVOLENT AND AUTHORITARIAN COUPLED WITH A STRONG STREAK OF LIBERALISM.

4. BY NATURE SADAT IS INTROSPECTIVE AND CONTEMPLATIVE. HIS FAMILY LIFE IS WARM, YET HE REGULARLY NEEDS TO GET AWAY FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS IN ORDER TO REFLECT. HE ATTRIBUTES HIS DESIRE FOR OCCASIONAL SOLITUDE TO HIS PRISON YEARS. THOUGH ONCE A GREAT READER, HE IS NO LONGER SO; INSTEAD, TALKING HAS ASSUMED PRE-EMINENCE IN HIS OPERATIONAL STYLE. THROUGHOUT HIS VARIOUS POLITICAL INCARNATIONS, SADAT HAS REMAINED ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED; HE IS AN EGYPTIAN NATIONALIST, DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE SOIL OF THE NILE VALLEY AND PROUD OF EGYPT'S LONG AND GLORIOUS PAST. THE PHARAONIC IN HIS POLITICAL MAKEUP IS STRONGER THAN THE ARAB. FROM IT HE DRAWS SENTIMENTALITY AND PATIENCE. LOYALTY TO FRIENDS AND TO THOSE WHOM HE TRUSTS IS A HALLMARK OF HIS CHARACTER, BUT THE PENDULUM SWINGS THE OTHER WAY WHEN HE BELIEVES HIS CONFIDENCE HAS BEEN BETRAYED. BROUGHT UP IN A DELTA AGRICULTURAL VILLAGE, THE INALIENABILITY OF LAND LOOMS LARGE IN HIS VALUES. IN SECRET

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NATIONAL TERMS, THIS TRANSLATES INTO THE INALIENABILITY OF EGYPTIAN TERRITORY.

5. LIKE MOST EGYPTIANS, HE IS STEEPED IN THE CONVICTION THAT EGYPT HAS AN INHERENT RIGHT TO LEADERSHIP IN THE ARAB WORLD. HE FINDS IT HARD TO ACCEPT RECENT CHALLENGES TO THAT LEADERSHIP FROM OTHER ARAB QUARTERS. MINDFUL OF EGYPT'S SACRIFICES IN BEHALF OF THE ARABS AND ITS RESULTANT ECONOMIC PROSTRATION, HE LIKE HIS COUNTRYMEN INWARDLY RESENTS WHAT HE CONSIDERS THE MISERLINESS OF THE WEALTHY ARABS IN PROVIDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, BUT GENERALLY MANAGES TO KEEP THAT RESENTMENT CONCEALED. IT IS GALLING FOR COSMOPOLITAN EGYPTIANS TO HAVE TO APPROACH SAUDIS OR GULF ARABS, WHOM THEY REGARD AS ONLY RECENTLY OUT OF THE DESERT, FOR LARGESSE.

6. SADAT IS TODAY A MAN OF PEACE. HE HAS SHOWN CONSIDERABLE STATESMANSHIP AND COURAGE IN PURSUIT OF THAT GOAL, BUT HE IS ALSO UNPREDICTABLE. AT ONCE A MASTER POLITICAL STRATEGIST AND A SHREWD TACTICIAN, HE CAN QUICKLY TACK AND CHANGE COURSE. HE IS DISAPPOINTED AT THE SLUGGISH PACE OF THE PEACE PROCESS, BUT PROFESSES CONTINUED OPTI-

MISM. HIS APPROACH IS THAT OF A CONCEPTUALIST AND HE TENDS TO BE IMPATIENT WITH DETAIL.

7. SADAT IS BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED IN PRIMIN BEGIN, WHOM HE CONSIDERS INCAPABLE OF GRASPING THE PEACE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY HIS NOVEMBER PEACE INITIATIVE. HE FRANKLY WONDERES WHETHER PEACE IS POSSIBLE SO LONG AS BEGIN IS IN OFFICE. HE HAS PLACED ALL OF HIS EGGS IN THE UNITED

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 19474

EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

STATES BASKET AND IS CONVINCED THAT ONLY WE CAN INDUCE ISRAEL TO TAKE A MORE FLEXIBLE STANCE. FOR THIS TO HAPPEN, HE MAINTAINS, THE UNITED STATES MUST PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE. HIS CONFIDENCE IN PRESIDENT CARTER IS GREAT, HE ADMIRES THE PRESIDENT AS A PERSON, AND HE LOOKS TO HIM SOMEHOW TO SET THE FRAYED PEACE PROCESS ARIGHT. IN CONTRAST, HIS DISTRUST OF THE SOVIETS REMAINS DEEP AND HE IS CONVINCED THAT THEY WILL SPARE NO EFFORT TO UNSEAT HIM. MANY CRITICIZE HIM FOR HIS ANTI-SOVIET PARANOIA, CONTENDING THAT THE UNITED STATES CANNOT BE RELIED UPON AND THE EGYPT SHOULD IN ITS OWN BEST INTERESTS CONDUCT A MORE BALANCED POLICY BETWEEN THE TWO SUPERPOWERS.

8. SADAT READILY ACCEPTED THE INVITATION TO A CAMP DAVID SUMMIT. WHILE THERE ARE CONFLICTING REPORTS OF WHAT HE THINKS WILL COME OUT OF IT, OUR INDICATIONS ARE THAT HE IS APPROACHING IT IN A POSITIVE SPIRIT. HE RECOGNIZES THE TIMELINESS OF THE MEETING AS WELL AS THE RISKS INVOLVED FOR ALL. TRY AS HE MIGHT, HE COULD NOT LONG HAVE SUSTAINED HIS PEACE EFFORT IN THE ABSENCE OF SOME TANGIBLE MOVEMENT. IN RESPONSE TO GROWING ARAB PRESSURE, HE

WOULD BEFORE LONG HAVE HAD TO THROW IN THE TOWEL
AND ADMIT FAILURE. NOW AT STAKE, THEREFORE, IS THE ABILITY
AND WILLINGNESS OF THE UNITED STATES TO
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FULFILL ITS PLEDGE TO WORK FOR A JUST AND DURABLE
PEACE. THIS, TO HIM, IS THE PRIME ISSUE TO BE RESOLVED
IN THE CAMP DAVID MEETING.

9. WE HAVE REPORTS THAT HE WOULD LIKE THE MEETING TO
RESULT IN A PUBLISHED SET OF PRINCIPLES FOR RESUMED
NEGOTIATIONS, BASED ON UN RESOLUTION 242 AND THE ASWAN
LANGUAGE AS IT PERTAINS TO THE PALESTINIANS. ALONG SIDE
THIS PUBLIC DOCUMENT, WE HAVE BEEN RELIABLY TOLD THAT HE
WOULD LIKE A SECRET AGREEMENT SPELLING OUT A FULLER
FRAMEWORK OF A POSSIBLE SETTLEMENT AND TO BE SIGNED BY
THE PRINCIPALS. DETAILS COULD SUBSEQUENTLY BE NEGOTIATED
AT MINISTERIAL LEVELS. ANY SUCH ARRANGEMENT RAISES THE
QUESTION OF SADAT'S ABILITY TO COMMIT HIMSELF. HE CAN
BE SWEEPING AND, IN HIS "GRAND SEIGNEUR" MANNER, SOMETIMES
HAS A TENDENCY TO PROMISE MORE THAN HE CAN PRODUCE. THIS
INEVITABLY RESULTS IN SUBSEQUENT EXTRICATION EFFORTS AND
A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF BACK PEDDLING. BUT HE IS ESSENTIALLY
A MAN OF HONOR WHO STANDS BY HIS WORD, AND HE DESERVES
HIGH MARKS FOR BREAKING OUT OF THE MOLD OF TRADITIONAL
ARAB NEGATIVENESS.

10. SADAT IS ESSENTIALLY A POLITICAL BEING. HIS WAKING
HOURS ARE SPENT PONDERING THE ARAB/ISRAELI PROBLEM AND
EGYPT'S RELATIONS WITH ITS FELLOW ARABS. HIS RELATIONS
WITH THE SAUDIS ARE GOOD AND HE LOOKS TO THEM FOR SUPPORT,
BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC. HIS RELATIONS WITH JORDAN
ARE CORRECT, BUT HE HAS LITTLE CONFIDENCE THAT KING
HUSSEIN WILL SCREW UP HIS COURAGE AND JOIN THE NEGOTIATING
PROCESS. EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN RELATIONS ARE BADLY STRAINED.
LIBYA'S LEADER, QADHAFI, IS VIEWED AS A SOVIET SURROGATE
AND A THREAT TO AFRICAN AND EGYPTIAN STABILITY. MOROCCO
IS A CLOSE FRIEND AND TUNISIA IS TOLERATED. IRAQ AND MOST
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OTHER ARAB STATES ARE TOO FAR DISTANT TO TAKE INTO MORE
THAN NOMINAL ACCOUNT. SINCE HIS TRIP TO JERUSALEM,
SADAT'S RELATIONS WITH ARAFAT AND THE PLO HAVE BEEN
STRAINED. ARAFAT, HOWEVER, CONTINUES TO SEND HIM MESSAGES
URGING THAT EGYPT NOT ABANDON AL-FATAH. SADAT WOULD LIKE
TO SEE A NEW PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP EMERGE, MADE UP OF

PLO MODERATES LIKE KHALID AL-HASSAN AND INDIGENOUS WEST
BANK/GAZA TYPES. HE HAS LITTLE PRESENT CAPACITY TO
FACILITATE THE CREATION OF SUCH AN ALTERNATIVE LEADER-
SHIP AND, LIKE MOST EGYPTIANS, KNOWS LITTLE ABOUT WEST
BANK TERRAIN OR POLITICAL DYNAMICS. EILTS

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